

REMARKS

The Office Action of August 28, 2008, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, claims 1, 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Erickson (U.S. Patent No. 4,120,389) and claims 2 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erickson in view of Nakamura et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0160701).

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 3-6, 8, 9 and 11-14 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter and in an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to include the recitations of allowable claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as well as claims 2, 4-6 and 15 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form and includes the recitations from allowable claims 8 and 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 7 is now in condition for allowance.

Allowable claim 11 has been amended to independent form, and includes the recitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 10. As such, Applicants submit that claims 11 and 12 are now in condition for allowance.

Allowable claim 13 has been rewritten in independent form. Thus, claims 13 and 14 are now in condition for allowance.

As a final matter, in reviewing the application file, Applicants note that there was a typographical error on the PTO-1449 form submitted with the Third Information Disclosure Statement filed September 19, 2007. The PTO-1449 form incorrectly listed one of the references as "WO 92/24579" whereas the correct reference number corresponding to the submitted document was --WO 94/24579--. For the Examiner's convenience, a corrected PTO-1449 form is attached hereto listing only the corrected reference. Acknowledgement and consideration of the same is kindly requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

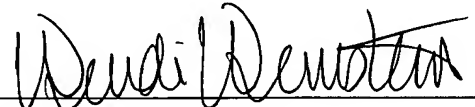
Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicant regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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